

REMARKS

Claims 12 through 32 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 through 11 are canceled by the present amendment, and claims 31 and 32 are newly added.

Applicants note with appreciation that section 5 of the Office Action states that claims 12 through 16, 27 and 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants rewrote claim 12, as suggested by the Examiner. Furthermore, as explained below, Applicants amended several other claims to include recitals similar to those of claim 12, and added claims that include recitals previously presented in claims 27 and 28. As such, Applicants believe that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

Applicants note that the Office Action Summary, item 6, lists claims 12 through 16 as being rejected. However, in view of the aforementioned statement in section 5 of the Office Action indicating that claims 12 through 16 would be allowable if rewritten, Applicants are assuming that the listing of claims 12 through 16 as being rejected is an error.

In section 1 of the Office Action, the disclosure is objected to because of several informalities. Applicants amended the specification as suggested by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully solicited.

In sections 3 through 6 of the Office Action, claims 1 through 10, 17 through 26, 29 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). As explained below, Applicants amended the claims in a manner that Applicants believe places all of the pending claims in condition for allowance.

Applicants note that the Office Action does not affirmatively address the status of claim 11. However, claim 11 is canceled.

Claims 1 through 10 are canceled. Thus, the rejection of claim 1 through 10 is rendered moot.

Claims 17 through 21 depend from claim 12. As noted above, Applicants rewrote claim 12 in independent form, thus placing claim 12 in condition for allowance. Claims 17 through 21, by virtue of their dependence on claim 12, are now also in condition for allowance.

Claim 22 is an independent claim. Applicants amended claim 22 to include a recital similar to that previously presented in claim 12. As such, Applicants submit that claim 22 is now in condition for allowance.

Claims 23 through 26 depend from claim 22. By virtue of this dependence, claims 23 through 26 are now also in condition for allowance.

Claim 29 is an independent claim. Applicants amended claim 29 to include a recital similar to that previously presented in claim 12. As such, Applicants submit that claim 29 is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 30 is an independent claim. Applicants amended claim 30 to include a recital similar to that previously presented in claim 12. As such, Applicants submit that claim 30 is now in condition for allowance.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the section 103(a) rejections of claims 1 through 10, 17 through 26, 29 and 30.

Applicants wish for the Examiner to note that claims 13 through 16 depend from claim 12, and that claims 27 and 28 depend from claim 22. Since each of claims 12 and 22 is now in condition for allowance, claims 13 through 16, 27 and 28 are also in condition for allowance.

Applicants added claims 31 and 32 to even further provide the claim coverage that Applicants appear to deserve based on the prior art that was cited by the Examiner.

Claim 31 includes recitals that were previously presented in claims 22, 23, 26 and 27. Whereas section 7 of the Office Action indicates that claim 27 included allowable subject matter, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 31 is allowable.

Claim 32 depends from claim 31. By virtue of this dependence, claim 32 is also allowable.

Applicants amended claims 12, 22, 29 and 30 to include recitals that were previously presented in other claims. Claims 17, 18 and 21 are amended to update their dependencies in view of the amendments to other claims. None of the amendments narrows the scope of any term of any claim, and therefore, the doctrine of equivalents should be available for all of the terms of all of the claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims presented in this application patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and that this application be passed to allowance.

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Date

Respectfully submitted,

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